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TELEGRAM

September 22, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 4314 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PARM, MOPS
Captions: None
Subject: SCENESETTER FOR GENERAL ABIZAID'S VISIT TO THE UAE
Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 04314

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DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MWAHBA
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY
CLEARED: DCM:RAALBRIGHT; USLO:RSIMM

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 004314

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CENTCOM FOR POLAD AMB LITT AND CCJ2
NSC FOR THEROUX
DOD FOR OSD/ISA/NESA
STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/NGA AND PM/RSAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/13
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [MOPS](#) [GCC](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR GENERAL ABIZAID'S
VISIT TO THE UAE

Ref: Abu Dhabi 4206

1. (U) Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba
for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

2. (C) General Abizaid: I would like to welcome
you back to the UAE for your full introductory

visit. You will be calling on Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and have an opportunity for fuller discussions with UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff LTG Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (MbZ) and Dubai Crown Prince GEN Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MbR).

¶3. (S) Your September 8 visit to Abu Dhabi was greatly appreciated, in large part because of your frank exchange with MbZ on Iraq, Afghanistan, and terrorism (described in reftel), but also because we benefited from a first-hand account of developments on the ground in Iraq. Your expressed concerns about the Sunnis will no doubt resonate with your Emirati hosts during your upcoming visit.

¶4. (C) Your meeting with Crown Prince Khalifa will take place in a large, open majlis setting. It will be a general discussion during which the Crown Prince will want to hear your views on Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. As all major decisions regarding deployments require his approval, you may wish to thank him for his support during OEF and OIF and strong UAEG support for the Governing Council and Iraq reconstruction. MbZ is the appropriate interlocutor for the full range of bilateral issues.

SUGGESTED THEMES

¶5. (C) We propose that you touch on the following key bilateral military issues, in addition to the more general themes outlined below in para five:

-- Provide a "look-ahead" on our likely military footprint both in the UAE specifically and the region more generally, including the proposed establishment of CENTAF Forward Headquarters in Abu Dhabi (MbZ);

-- Focus the UAE military leadership on the need, as part of our commitment to building and solidifying our strong military ties, to work out a functioning Defense Cooperation Agreement (MbZ, MbR);

-- Express our enthusiasm about the validation course at the Air Warfare Center, now tentatively scheduled for December 2003. The Center will be a model for multilateral training in the region (MbZ);

-- The Dubai Air Show takes place December 7-11, and will be preceded by a UAE-hosted Air Chiefs' Conference. The UAE Government regards this as a major event and expects strong US support and presence. You can anticipate a request to provide both static display and demonstration aircraft for the Air Show, as well as topics and briefings for the Air Chiefs' Conference (MbZ, MbR). (For your background: We are concerned by the lack of formal DOD approval of US participation in Dubai Air Show. Without this approval, we cannot retain the rooms we have reserved beyond Oct. 1, nor can we arrange for the logistical support of aircraft and air crews.)

¶6. (S) More broadly, you may also wish to:

-- Express thanks for the UAE's exemplary support for U.S. and coalition efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, namely access to bases and logistical support, including air and sealift of Bulgarian troops to Iraq, the UAE SOC deployment at Bagram, as well as extensive intelligence coordination (Crown Prince Khalifa, MbZ);

-- Pass on our gratitude for the UAE's generous humanitarian assistance, especially the UAE Armed Force's establishment of the very successful Sheikh Zayed hospital in Baghdad and the UAE's efforts to re-supply with equipment and medicine other Iraqi hospitals and the provision of basic foodstuffs to the Iraqi people (Crown Prince Khalifa, MbZ);

-- Express thanks for the UAE's strong public statement of support for the Iraqi Governing Council and the newly formed government of Iraq (Crown Prince Khalifa, MbZ, MbR);

-- Consult and provide assurances on need to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity, minimize external influence (Iran) and manage sectarian rivalries (MbZ, MbR);

-- Convey our concern over Dubai-based Al-Arabiya Television's occasional sensationalistic broadcasting, including threats to kill Iraqi Governing Council members and their supporters (MbZ, MbR).

BILATERAL MILITARY ISSUES

Regional Footprint:

¶7. (C) If appropriate, I would recommend that you outline with the leadership -- MbZ -- what we see in terms of our likely regional footprint, and specifically what we have in mind for the UAE. MbZ and his Air Force Commander have dropped strong hints at being open to a more robust presence, including a CENTAF Forward Headquarters, but we need to prepare them for the direction in which we may wish to move here.

Defense Cooperation Agreement

¶8. (C) We need to discuss a successor agreement to the dormant, unimplemented Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), which comes up for renewal in ¶2006. This will require heavy lifting on both sides and the sooner we agree on a strategy and define our "non-negotiable" items, the easier it will be to proceed with the Emiratis. Your visit would provide a good opportunity to resurface this important bilateral military issue.

Air Warfare Center

¶9. (C) The Gulf Air Warfare Center at al-Dhafra Base is an important initiative. The Center has tremendous potential to become a resource for multilateral training, defense cooperation, and compatibility. The AWC will provide an excellent opportunity for CENTCOM pilots to hone their skills in theater. It comes with the added benefit of offering the perfect setting for our officers to build long-term relationships with their Arab and European coalition counterparts. The AWC represents the UAE leadership's commitment to increasing inter-operability with U.S. and coalition forces.

ATACMs/Predator Update -- (If Raised)

¶10. (S) We are moving forward with the ATACMs 1A deal. The Emiratis have agreed to the principles outlined in what will be a regional Memorandum of Understanding governing the use of this system. We are awaiting the provision of a revised P&A, following an Emirati visit to the US last July to

discuss their forecast system requirements.

¶11. (S) Over the past year, MbZ raised his desire to procure the armed Predator B with just about every interlocutor in Washington. He believes this system will provide the UAE the much-needed capability to survey and defend its long, porous coasts and inland borders. MbZ has indicated he is not interested in purchasing the unarmed Predator. The Joint Staff is currently coordinating a policy decision with State regarding release of this MCTR Category I weapon system to the UAE. CENTCOM recently forwarded an assessment to OSD supporting sale of an unarmed Predator B to the UAE. We are awaiting an OSD policy decision on this issue. The Emiratis will find it difficult to understand that we can sell them F-16s while denying them an armed Predator B.

E-2C Hawkeye - (If Raised)

¶12. (C) We are making progress on a UAE request to obtain E-2C Hawkeye Advanced Early Warning aircraft. Although the original LOA lapsed in July without a UAE signature, they have signed a Letter of Intent to study the offer further and deposited \$5 million to continue negotiations. The US Navy International Programs Office has the lead on this project. A team arrives on September 26 bringing with them a restated LOA extending pricing and availability until the end of the year. The goal is to obtain a signed LOA in time to announce a deal at the Dubai Air Show in December 2003. The five aircraft have been transferred to Northrop Grumman, which is awaiting UAE acceptance of an LOA to begin refurbishing.

¶13. (CS) The AH-64 Apache A-to-D Remanufacture LOA lapsed in July. UAE officials continue to conduct discussions with Boeing and US Army officials as though the LOA were still valid, despite notice to the contrary. This issue will be a key discussion item at the upcoming UAE Financial Management Review in Washington, Sept. 29-Oct. 3. The UAE needs to provide another formal Letter of Request and obtain updated Pricing and Availability before Boeing and USASAC proceed with this project. Meanwhile, the planned transfer of the AH-64H fleet from UAEAF to UAE Land Forces has been postponed, pending a remanufacture decision.

BROADER ISSUES

Afghanistan: SOC Deployment

¶14. (S) The UAE Armed Forces has deployed a 35-man Emirati Special Operations contingent to Bagram Air Base. As you know, the UAE continues to play a very helpful role in Afghanistan, particularly in the provision of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. The UAE Armed Forces provided the Afghan National Army with approximately \$50 million in assistance in kind in 2002 and overall humanitarian assistance has crossed the \$50 million mark. The UAEG also continues to provide substantial personal financial support to President Karzai.

Iraq: UAE Humanitarian/Medical Assistance

¶15. (SBU) As you know, the Emiratis were among the first in the Arab world to step up to the plate in providing much-needed humanitarian assistance and

medical relief to the Iraqi people. The Embassy, the HOC in Kuwait and CENTCOM worked closely with the UAE Red Crescent Authority to move supplies into Iraq and transport Iraqi patients to the UAE for treatment. This cooperation continues. Thanks to the system put in place by CENTCOM and the HOC, the Emiratis are now moving assistance into Iraq on an almost daily basis using their own transportation. The Sheikh Zayed hospital in Baghdad continues to receive hundreds of patients a day and the Emiratis are now considering adopting yet another hospital.

Iraq: Timely Public Statements

¶16. (U) The Emiratis strongly supported Iraqi delegations to the IMF/World Bank meetings in Dubai, and at the Arab League summit in Cairo. In mid-August, the Emirati leadership hosted six members of the GC - the first Gulf country to do so. Strong public statements of support for the GC and the Iraqi people followed the visit and after the formation of the new Iraqi Cabinet. The Emiratis issued a strong public condemnation for the attacks against the UN's Baghdad headquarters and against Ayatollah Baqir al-Hakim and his followers in Najaf. Publicly and privately, the UAE's message has been consistent, and perhaps best summed up in the words of Crown Prince Khalifa: "It is imperative for us to support the Iraqi people and the Governing Council's efforts out of a desire to see Iraq overcome the present state of affairs and build a better future for its sons."

Al Arabiya TV - Out of bounds

¶17. (SBU) Al Arabiya, the Dubai-based Arabic satellite news station competing with Al Jazeera for viewers, has stirred up controversy with sensationalistic broadcasts of Coalition POWs and dead Iraqis during OIF, and more recently, because of a broadcast by hooded terrorists threatening to kill GC members and their supporters. We have expressed our concern to both the UAE and Saudi governments and the director of the Dubai Media City where Al Arabiya is located. (King Fahd's brother-in-law Walid Al Ibrahim is the principal owner of Al Arabiya.)

WAHBA